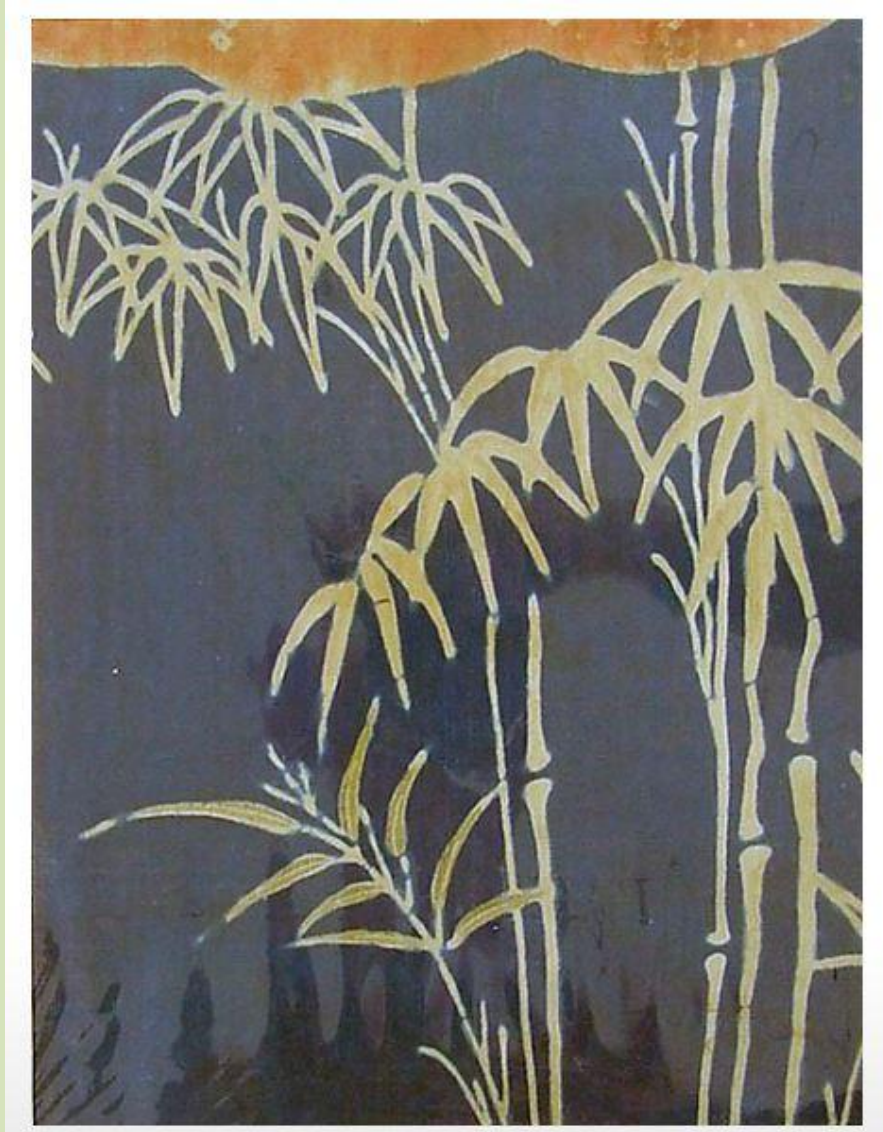


Selected Poetry from *The Measure*: October 1921 - May 1922



*"Textile with Bamboo and Partial Cloud" by Japan via
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1921

PASSERS-BY

by George O'Neil

O you who do not heed me as I go
Along my myriad unmeaning ways
More than you heed the first light fall of snow
Flurrying through this deep December haze!

Oh, are you not aware as well as I
That every vibrant sunward pointed tree
Shall someday shatter into dust and fly
Less tangible than foam tossed from the sea?

Have you not thought how every stone and star
May vanish? that no vague or certain things
Are less explainable than we two are,
Are more eternal than a bird that sings?

Now in us both there is a flame that glows
At the brief sad grasping of a friendly hand,
For the insistent shading of a rose
And all the truth we do not understand;

And yet we glance and go indifferently!
And probably you would not care to know
That some one breathes this quiet litany,
Passing you ... in the silence of the snow.

SUMMER NIGHT

by Kenneth Slade Alling

Like a bell note shivered into fragments of fine sound:
The summer night. But silence and the stillness do astound
Me more than all this strange-go-round
Of multitudinously minted chords along the ground.

This is an edifice of silence, vast:
Into the chinks of silence sound will creep
A little while—and fall asleep,
Its strength being spent and past.

They say the crickets sing all night :
I know
They strike against the walls of silence,
Insistently, a futile blow.

VOLCANO

By Hilda Conkling

In Mexico a mountain stands alone.
It looms above me . . . a joy strikes my heart
I see its transparent colors, its long opal hair.
But the moon would make it shine
A heap of silver.
My thoughts are gone from me
Because of that splendid trembling iridescent thing
I know it will fade,
I know it must go.
Songs float over its crest,
Dusk is coming on
I will touch the mountain/
My fingers touch air.
The broad bright country sways in folds
Like long slow waves . . .
If all the hills were water rising and falling
This would be the highest wave,
This would be the white-hooded wave
This would be the great wave for sea-gulls to follow !

TEA TIME

by Emmy Veronica Sanders

The door creaks faintly. Shutting out the gloom
Of the long dark hall,
The child tiptoeing enters the large familiar room
Filled with fragrance of roses and strongflavored tea.

From the tall elms that border the old canal
Through open windows, quietly,
Filters the soft green dusk—
And the little orange flames under the spirit lamp flicker and play
Over the shining silver tea things on the lacquer tray.

The voice of the drowsy City
Sounds muffled and vague as if from very far—
With now and then the sharper rattle of a lumbering car
Over the cobblestones of the old vaulted bridge.

Under the elmtree foliage the low barges lie moored
With their deckloads of flowers in boxes and pots—
Pansies, heliotrope, forget-me-nots
And rows of purple fuchsia and colorless mignonettes.
And between the barges' darkening silhouettes
Here and there you catch a gleam
Of the pale stagnant stream.

In the strong scents of flowers and damp earth
And the rich golden fragrance of tea
Lingers a stale tepid odor of decay and death.
Exhalations from the old canal
And the City's feverish impure summer breath.

And in the peace of the old duskfilled room
A sudden longing poignantly seizes the child
For dimly visioned beauty undefiled
In dimly visioned worlds that strangely loom
On far horizons.

A PERSUASION

by Hart Crane

If she waits late at night
Hearing the wind,
It is to gather kindnesses
No world can offer.

She has drawn her hands away.
The wind plays andantes
Of lost hopes and regrets,—
And yet is kind.

Below the wind,
Waiting for morning
The hills lie curved and blent
As now her heart and mind.

SURVIVAL

by Louise Bogan

I hoped that you would die out from me
With the year.
Between you and my heart I thrust
The glittering seasons.

I denied you with late summer,
Watching the green-white hydrangea change
To petalled balls of thin and ashen blue,
And nasturtiums, hot orange on stems like ice or glass
Shriveling by round leaves.

I went on to autumn
Without you,
Seeing hills burdened by trees colored unevenly:
Appled, pearyellow,
And leaves falling in ravines, through bitter smoke,
Falling indirectly,
A long waver and turn.
Those evenings came
High and shining over rivers like quicksilver;
And latest autumn :
The underbrush sienna, cut, twisted, carved,
Red berries shaken through it like beads
Scattered in barbaric hair.

Nothing moves in the fields that once had the grass.
To look upon the fields
Is like silence laid upon the eyes.
The house is shut sternly
From limitless radiance outside
In these days of afternoon stars.

The year dies out.
Who are you to be stronger than the year?
I have you like long cold sunshine in an empty room,
Through and beyond black thaws that rot the snow.

FULFILMENT

by Helen West Heller

A man's cool breath across a woman's breasts!
How, with brush or word, its beauty shown?
(italics)Across the mountain-tops the mist is blown.(ital)

Are the mountains sentient and may thrill
when over them the breezes drag the wraith—
with coolness of the off-sea wind; not chill
but soothing to their loneliness and thirst?

The rhythms break in faint and subtle glimmer.
The touch of joy? (ital)Night scent off iris fields;
thin waves of starlight glancing in snow-shimmer.(ital)
To his brow's pressure now the white drift yields.

Is any fact of nature might be sweeter?
A babe's cheek there, perhaps; I do not know:
the green, strong ebb and flow in ocean's metre,
the impulse makes the pale night flowers blow?

A man's slow breath across a woman's breasts;
thought subtly going between far-off friends;
and trail the mountain cloud's uneven ends.

THE NIGHT TRAIN

by Charles R. Murphy

Each night, at time of half-shut eyes, this train
Enters our sphere of silence and of pine
And down the lonely straightness of its line
Prolongs its mellow whistle; and again
More distant and more speechful, its refrain,
Like cry of beast, seeks distance and the fine
Ear of silent places—swamps whence shine
No life, and hope of answer is in vain.
A heavenly beast with beauty in its throat,
Put there by man but willed not to be so,
Conscious alone in rending this remote
Night of the silence where all gone things stay,
Flinging its challenge to the long-ago,
Yearning with dream-tired dreamers for the day.

TWO SONNETS TO MY WIFE

by Maxwell Bodenheim

I

Because her voice is Schonberg in a dream
In which his harshness plays with softer keys
This does not mean that it is void of ease
And cannot gather to a strolling gleam.
Her voice is full of manners, and they seem
To place a masquerade on thought and tease
Its strength until it finds that it has knees,
And whimsically leaves its heavy scheme.

Discords can be the search of harmony
For worlds that lie beyond the reach of poise
And must be captured with abandoned hands.
The music of my wife strives to be free,
And often takes a light unbalanced voice
While madly walking over thoughtful lands.

II

My wife relents to life and does not speak
Each moment with a deft and rapid note.
Sometimes a clumsy weirdness finds her throat
And ushers in a music that is weak
And bargains with the groping of her heart.
But even then she plays with graver tones
That do not sell themselves to laughs and moans,
But seek the counsel of a deeper art.

She drapes her loud emotions in a shroud
Of glistening thought that waves above their dance,
And sometimes parts to show their startled eyes.
The depths of mind within her have not bowed
To sleek emotion with its amorous glance.
She slaps its face and laughs at its surprise !

THE LAST

by Miriam Vedder

You will not find a beggar at your door,
Crouching and snivelling in the evening light,
Praying a bed and shelter from the night :
Beggars come not so often, anymore.

Nor will you find the guest for whom you wait,
When you rise quickly, and undo the lock,
Thinking you hear a once-familiar knock:
Guests are less frequent when the hour is late.

Only a stranger will be standing there,
Seeking, not entrance, but the way to go
To some far house. And that you will not know ;
Nor why his eyes are heavy with despair.

1922

MY STREET

A sonnet sequence of East Side New York

by Isadore Schneider

I. *The Houses*

The twenty houses on my street look down
Upon its life with insufficient eyes;
Like aged dogs they watch with meek surprise,
Or like old women drawing up a gown
They shrink up narrowly upon brick walls;
Their yellow coping tears like eaten lace,
Their roofs are bowed like heads renouncing place,
Like a dejected arm each column falls.

The twenty houses on my street are old;
They warm their humbled bodies in the sun.
Sometimes their weary windows lean and scold
The intruding life that interrupts their peace.
With patient eyes they seek oblivion
Folding their doorways in content release.

II. *The Gutter*

Your gray abandon whirls you like a flood.
Within you children, leaping bathers, ride
Your mottled surf of garbage, your strewn wood
Eddying together like flotsam in a tide.
The pushcarts hinge like oysters to the curb,
The vocal autos glide like smooth, swift fish,
The wagons plod too careful to disturb
These supple tongues with ancients' gibberish.

At night your dark waves roll beside our door,
Floods shadowy and silent and suspect,
And each lit window of a neighbor store
Shudders apart and seems to recollect

Strayed ships, lost men, and glitter-lighted shore,
Where slatternly sirens mumble and reflect.

III. *The Lampposts*

The monkey boys try out their sloppy legs
Around your smooth trunks and upon your branch.
They see you eye to eye and your lights blanch
Before their ardor, taking as it begs.
No, you're no tall trees, each with a single bird
Preening before us a red and yellow wing;
And you're no bright locked shepherds here that bring
Slant crooks of light to gather in the herd.

While with hard feet and clamoring of doors
Life irks your patient silence with strewn speech,
Your eight green posts in docile facing fours
All hold their bubble faces out of reach
And like one-minded, heedless auditors
Commune in muted whispers, each to each.

IV. *The People*

The old men let their faces run into
Their keen gray beards that jostle on their chests;
Examplimg the ancient patience of the Jew
They walk the paces of their broken rests.
Drab women bright with children give to view
The white, fat, folded curvets of their breasts,
Or market-eyed with haggling jaws they shrew,
Their visages annulled beneath shawled crests.

Their small, limp husbands shoulder-bowed or paunched,
Sidling their home-way through the huddled street,
Bring wounds of weariness not too early staunch
With kissing children, who on glutted feet,
By placid wives from all the doorways launched,
Make their bare day ends populous and sweet.

V. *Empty Lot*

Your patient nudity is like a rump.
The sheds and fences, fallen from the street,

Like loosened clothing draggle toward your feet;
Like pocket flaps they pad you, thump by thump.
Your sharp, blank sides of stones are like white scabs
That no rain heals or scratching of the wind;
Like armpit hair your grass, abject and thinned,
Shows furtive in retreat beneath their slabs.

Now all the things that stub you with vain heels
Like blank, exploring dogs, or spattering wheels,
Lay on you casual indignities.
Even the all-humiliating skies
Reserve you for exceptional ordeals,
While you endure all day with barren eyes.

VI. *The Beggar And The Vendor*

Holding a worn out misery in his face
Which age has tied with wrinkles as with strings,
He stops the passersby as one who brings
The right to pity and attendant grace.
Across the gutter which divides domain
The vendor sits with baskets on his knee,
Straightening out his tattered dignity,
And eyes the beggar with content disdain.

The street is heedless; their contention goes
Through unwatched daily campaigns of cold eyes;
The same rain sucks them, and with equal snows
The wind attires them from evenly shared skies;
And people with a balanced shrug disclose
That they are taken for compact allies.

VII. *Sunset*

The houses are ingenious filigree
Of the tall frame that arches its caress.
The street wipes its old mirrors till they see
This splendor that atones for sordidness,—
A drama played upon a captured sky:
The old recurrent passion of the sun,
Too vast that it be ended or begun
Within the measure of the watching eye.

All that the street remembers of grand things
Between the wrench of day and stamp of night
(The futile dawns are lost where no cock sings)
Are these too sudden gestures of the light,
Which call to it, with urgent beckonings,
Full with vague mutinies that they incite.

CHICAGO RIVER

by Thomas Hornsby Ferril

Brown oil, the water, where two barges start
To empty the untouched of city plates ;
Their prows bump greasy peacock tails apart,
Each scattered tail swirls back to whole and waits
Along its window-palisaded straits :
The smoky bridge will hump its creaky back
And let new fat hulks through the peacock gates . . .
These murky voyageurs of charted track
Are helmsmen bleak and still and lone, and lack
What joy of persecuting peacock tails
The rope-nosed prows draw, logging through the black,
Out to the dump beneath the yellow sails . . .
No boatman speaks . . . and each would carry out
A winter plan the other spoke about.

THE WIND

By Edward Shanks

Blow harder, wind, and drive
My blood from hands and face back to the heart.
Cry over ridges and down tapering coombes,
Carry the flying dapple of the clouds
Over the grass, over the soft-grained plough,
Stroke with ungentle hand the hill's rough hair
Against its usual set.
Snatch at the reins in my dead hands and push me
Out of the saddle, blow my laboring pony
Across the path. You only drive my blood
Nearer the heart from face and hands, and plant there,
Slowly burning, unseen, but alive and wonderful,
A numb, confused joy !
This little world's in tumult. Far away
The dim waves rise and wrestle with each other
And fall down headlong on the beach. And here
Quick gusts fly up the funnels of the valleys
And meet their raging fellows on the hill-tops
And we are in the midst.
This beating heart, enriched with the hands' blood,
Stands in the midst and feels the warm joy burn
In solitude and silence, while all about
The gusts clamour like living, crying birds
And the goose seems hardly tethered to the ground.
Blow louder, wind, about
My square-set house, rattle the windows, lift
The trap-door to the loft above my head
And let it fall, clapping. Yell in the trees
And throw a rotted elm-branch to the ground,
Flog the dry trailers of my climbing rose—
Make deep, O wind, my rest !

INDIAN PIPES

by Winifred Welles

These are the flowers for a mad bride—
At dusk, on the black earth, under black trees,
She shall fill her torn, white hands with these.
She shall be heard by all the countryside,
When she comes singing to the woods' edge—
Whiter than dogwood shall flutter on the ledge
The silver tatters of her bridal dress.
Singing in a cracked voice a song of craziness,
Down the vague meadow, where her floating veil
Rests on the mist, she shall wander till her wail
Dies along the river in the mown hay.

There they shall find her at break of day,
With eyes like the first white frost, with the tips
Of her tired fingers and the droop of her lips
Blackened like the flowers she had carried away,
The flowers that were all one waxen white,
Leaf, stem and cup, but could not last the night.

THE MILKMAN

by Louise Townsend Nicholl

It is four-thirty when the milkman comes;
The night is frayed and late.
And from my room which overhangs, by night,
The scattered village,
I hear him weave and spread
His mystic, early, unseen web.

His horse comes walking up the long, straight street,
But sometimes he himself is in the gate
Before I wake,
Seeing the intermittent light that's slung
From his dangling lantern in an arc,
Hearing the muffled clink of bottles
And the soft, fast pounding of his feet
(He walks as fast as his horse walks slow)
As he rounds the gravel path below
Bringing opaque whiteness through the dark.

There is another lantern swung
Beneath the wagon.
There is a moving pendulum of light upon the ceiling
Which tells me so.
That gently swaying square of light
Leaves me the rhythmic and contented feeling
Of jogging slowly through the thinning night—
And as they start again, the man and horse,
Into the checkered land where cocks begin to crow,
Partly I listen to the weaving web below,
Partly I go
Up one street, the next one down,
Weaving the whole unconscious town
Into a dreamlike and erratic web
Of milk and morning and the moving wheels.

Then when the checkered land,
Starred bright with cockcrow, soft with wheels,
Is all laid out with woven squares which will not look,

Tomorrow, as they sound tonight,
And every sleeping house is gathered loosely on the thread,
The milkman turns his horse toward bed.
The old horse understands, and feels
Release, or dawn;
The slow wheels quicken, rumble, as they cross

The bridge and brook
Into the circling, soft, outlying lands.
I lose them going up the hill.
But seem to hear them weaving still
A dim, white web
Of milk and morning and the moving wheels.

THE CAT

Hans Trausil

(Italian Quarter, New York City)
In front of the shop
Where the copper light of dried fish glitters
On the door-post like a sun-ray,
You see the tail of the hungry one

Brushing the grey pavement.
Softly like a wind-blown rag of yellow fur
It curls behind the wheel of the wagon
Where she sits feigning a life most tedious;

As though longing for the oblivion of slumber
She huddles crookedly between her lean flanks
And blinks at you slantingly and yawns,
And at times a twitching

Ripples through her hollow body
Wherein dwells the murderess and harlot;
As though for pastime she crouches there silently
A shabby Buddha, solitarily enthroned.

HOOF DUSK

by Carl Sandburg

The dusk of this box wood
is leather gold, buckskin gold,
and the hoofs of a dusk goat
leave their heel marks on it.
The cover of this wooden box
is a last-of-the-sunset red,
a red with a sandman sand
fixed in evening siftings—
late evening sands are here.
The gold of old clocks,
forgotten in garrets,
' hidden out between battles
of long wars and short wars,
the smoldering ember gold
of old clocks found again—
here is the small smoke fadeout
of their slow loitering.
Feel me with your fingers,
measure me in fire and wind:
maybe I am buckskin gold, old clock gold,
late evening sunset sand—
Let go
and loiter
in the smoke fadeout.

NOON IN A WOOD

by Maxwell Anderson

I have been walking up and down here cursing
All morning, and not a leaf has stirred ;
I have spilled black oaths enough to rot the heavens out
And the grass under my feet hasn't heard;
For all my grief the words pass wind-fallen
As though I had not spoken a word.

I remember now, there was a vengeance to be taken,
And the day is gone by;
There is someone dead—the madness was fresh upon me—
I heaped oaths against the sky;
And I knew in an hour the pain of all trapped races
Waiting here stubbornly to die.

Madman, let it alone, what shall be done,
What has ever been done, through the slipping years, to settle the score?
Here is one fallen, and here; earth takes them in wisdom to earth;
Hell—if a death be unjust it is one injustice the more—
There have been plenty; men have gone down—
One forgets—it has been forgotten often before.

PORTRAIT

by Faith Baldwin

Life runs and ravel in her febrile hands,
 As multi-colored skeins of fraying wool,
Here tangled, and here straight. She understands
How frail the stamina of several strands,
 And dares not, for impatience, jerk—or pull.

Intent, she winds. Engrossed she knits a gay,
 Soft garment for her soul. She knows
That, somewhere, Death, the little cat-at-play,
Claws at loose ends with humorous delay
 And soft, on padded paws, comes, waits, and goes.

SPRING IN THE ZOO

by Witter Bynner

They are so melancholy when they sing,
The monkeys that have mated yesteryear,
When in their partly puckered brows appear
The zoological effects of spring.
They whimper while the bulls are bellowing,
They leave the cadences to chantecleer.
Stallions are shriller. Cats are more severe.
But monkeys are so just about the thing.

The ignominy and the blatant urge
Of ancient, unintelligible lust!
I wonder if a cage is what compels
That supervision at the very verge,
That beady blink of undeceived disgust
While women's voices wave like little bells.

SONNETS TO SLEEP

By Amy S. Jennings

I. Protest

Again, to-night the little death of sleep
That lies so softly on our straining eyes?
Barely we won through to the second deep
Where star revealed to star across the skies
Glow in the clear ice of the upper air.
Now at the end of ways companionless
Are we benumbed before our spirits dare
Grow intimate with this new consciousness?

Stars, pallid stars, that lean upon the brink
Of silences unbroken, to discern
Where the upgathered harmony is sweeping
Below the troubled surface, must we turn,
While the first chords are faltering, and sink
Oblivious, into this alien sleeping?

II. Mutation

Here in the night's unguarded fastnesses,
Weary with petulance, the pale forms lie,
Loose-limbed and lovely, breathing sigh to sigh
Across the frail blooms of anemones.
Dim through the shadowy fronds of maiden-hair
Quivers the unsubstantial spray
Of a white waterfall that faints away
In intermittent whispers on the air.

Nothing of pride is left to them at all.
Nothing of passion or of power or will,
They have become as strangers and unknown,
Their silence is a touch that must appal.
Only the gods of heaven could be so still,
Only the high gods or the quarried stone.

Who the Contributors Are

Emmy Veronica Sanders is a Dutch writer of verse and criticism. She is now in Holland, after having lived here for several years.

Hart Crane, who is twenty-two years old, lives in Cleveland, O.

Carl Sandburg is too well known to need an introduction. His third volume of poetry, *Slabs of the Sunburnt West*, will be out in May.

Faith Baldwin is Mrs. Hugh Hamlin Cuthrell of Shelter Island Heights, New York. She has been publishing poetry for the last ten years. For the past two years she has been writing short stories. Her novel *Mavis of Green Hill* was brought out by Small Maynard last fall.

Witter Bynner's poem, *Spring in the Zoo*, was, judging from the manuscript, one conceived by the imaginative Emanuel Morgan, Mr. Bynner's other personality of *Spectrum* fame.

Amy S. Jennings was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, and graduated from Barnard College in 1920. At present she lives in New York. She has published one poem in the *Survey*.

Louise Bogan lives in New York.

Charles R. Murphy lives in Rockport, Mass.

Maxwell Bodenheim is well known to readers of poetry in America. His most recent volume is reviewed in the present issue of *The Measure*.

Some of Miriam Vedder's earlier poems—she is a Wellesley, 1916, graduate—were published without her consent by a young man calling himself "Dorian Hope."

Isadore Schneider knows and has sung of many other things beside the East Side, but probably he never has sung better than on this subject, —a subject nobody, we think, has handled so well. Mr. Schneider is a New Yorker and a journalist.

Thomas Hornsby Ferril is a young Denver poet who spent about two and a half years on The Denver Times after he left the army. He is at present a movie press agent in Denver.

Edward Shanks, an English poet, is the author of The Queen of China and one of the editors of London Mercury. Mr. Shanks wrote t[his] poem recently for *The Measure* while recovering from pneumonia.

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